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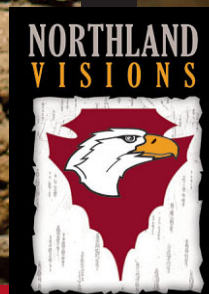
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The mean task of bringing
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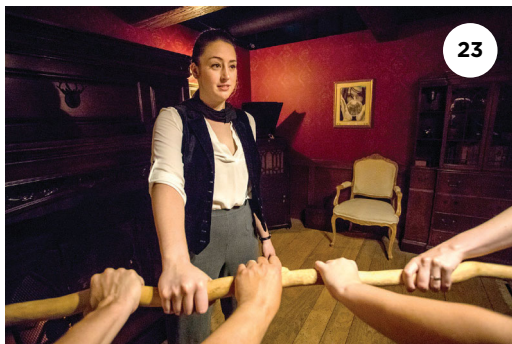
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22



23

7 FEATURE

ST. PAUL'S PROMISE

The mean task of bringing business to the Capital City *by Susan Du*

4 NEWS

THE SHORTLIST
Twin Citians are good volunteers

BLOTTER
A festival fight in Crystal

15 FOOD

STATE FAIR FOODS
Whither the new-things-on-a-stick?

17 A-LIST

MINNEHAHA FALLS ART FAIR
Check out art by local makers and Mother Nature

24 FILM

THE LION KING
New voices give this remake reason to exist

25 THEATER

CABAL
A puzzling play from Walking Shadow

27 MUSIC

BRETT TYLER
The former Minnesotan writes hits for country's biggest stars

29 CRITICS' PICKS

30 CONCERT LISTINGS

31 FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

CROSSWORD

32 CLASSIFIEDS

SAVAGE LOVE

cover credit

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STEVE COHEN

THE STAT SHEET:

\$267,000

State welfare Jimmy Fallon received
for taping his show in Minneapolis
during the Super Bowl

1

The Twin Cities' ranking among metro
areas for the highest levels of volunteer-
ing, according to the federal government

\$681 million

Federal welfare Minnesota's farmers have
taken to compensate for damage done
by President Trump's trade wars

331

Opioid deaths in
Minnesota last year, down
from 422 in 2017

"How about a mass of us sunbathing
topless on the same day? I'd love to
show support by letting my girls
go unsupported!"

Reader Kate Price Achamer DuPont
responds to "Duluth cops are called as
a woman asserts her right to sunbathe
topless," at citypages.com.

THE GODLY VS. GODLESS

SIXTY-NINE PERCENT OF U.S. evangelicals
support Donald Trump, a curiously lofty
figure for the most amoral man to ever
hold the White House. But their faith will be
tested if he makes good on his "bible tax."

That's what publishers are calling Trump's
threat of a 25 percent tariff in Chinese goods.
Most U.S. bibles are printed in that officially
godless country, and publishers say pro-
duction will crawl if talk turns to action,
causing a bible shortage in America.

Then again, evangelicals have man-
aged to overlook two dozen sexual abuse,
harassment, and rape claims against Trump.
Given the drumbeat of depravity that is the
president's life, we're guessing a scripture
famine will do little to dim their enthusiasm.

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in Uptown Minneapolis:
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reveals 2019 lineup for
downtown Minneapolis
'Fox & Friends' misleads
DONALD TRUMP
on St. Louis Park,
everything else

Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota's
playground to the wealthy, is
MAKING PEOPLE SICK

FIGHT FESTIVAL

New Hope just can't seem to keep its young from brawling at Duk Duk Daze

Duk Duk Daze has been a staple of New Hope summers for a half-century. It offers carnival rides, an arts and crafts fair, and Giant Jenga. That's what made it so disheartening to Duk Duk diehards last year when the event was peppered with teen brawls.

This year, the Duk Duk homepage promised changes. There would be only two secure points of entry, and security throughout. "Those belligerent to the rules" would be "promptly asked to leave by security."

There were some complaints about the changes to the festival. A few patrons tweeted out about "no cops at duk duk daze," and "we can't have duk duk daze or any other carnival for free no more since mfs want to fight n shit." But there were hopes it would at least keep things safe this year.

Cut to Saturday. A series of fights broke out that afternoon. Attendees posted on the Duk Duk Daze Facebook page that there was "absolute chaos, fights everywhere," "loud, pushy teens and adults," and "teenagers wearing what looked like bulletproof vests."

It's probably best to take the bulletproof vest thing with a grain of salt. But KARE 11 reported that there were "30 badged officers and community services officers deployed, and it wasn't enough to keep things under control."

"I don't know why they were fighting," New Hope Police Captain Scott Slawson says. "A lot of times, we don't get real answers about these things."

Slawson received no reports of anyone getting hurt. But the fireworks show was moved up an hour. Festivalgoers were turned away "immediately after 9:30 p.m." so the event could close early. Facebook



FACEBOOK

commenters said they were "escorted out" and that some "little punks" had "ruin[ed] the event for everyone."

Police ended up citing 10 people—mostly teens—with disorderly conduct.

Duk Duk Daze returned on Sunday with bingo, a petting zoo, and Frankie's Pizza Eating Contest. But it didn't stop people from speculating about what next year would look like—"curfews," "wristbands,"

and even barring access to unaccompanied minors.

Yet patrons begged fellow residents not to give up. "All of us were sad and disappointed, but vowing to never attend again and not allowing this year to be financially successful could well be the nail in the coffin for this event," one Facebook user commented. "I choose to not allow these teens to ruin this event for my community." —HANNAH JONES

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I.

A downtown land spat

In the middle of North Robert Street in downtown St. Paul, a 6,000-square-foot plaza sits in the shadow of the U.S. Bank Center, behind a bus stop. Left over from 1960s-era redevelopment of the block, it's since become an eyesore, home to a forlorn fountain and a tribe of pigeons.

St. Paul's public housing authority owned 375 N. Robert Street, but had no use for it. The parcel was unbuildable because adjacent buildings' overhangs poked into its airspace. The city's only hope was to transfer it into private hands, where it could at least generate some taxes.

Ramsey County valued the property at \$326,400. It was still a hardy chunk of downtown with potential for some imaginative revenue scheme in the hands of the right capitalist. The city begged to differ. Its appraisal produced a clearance price of \$30,000.

In the fall of 2017, Madison Equities, a major St. Paul real estate corporation that managed all the surrounding properties, proposed using the plaza as a patio for adjoining restaurant space that had been empty for years. Outdoor seating could attract a new tenant. Madison Equities offered \$2,500.

Andrew Hestness of the Housing Redevelopment Authority says city policy is to sell land at or above its appraised value. Yet sustained negotiations couldn't persuade Madison Equities to improve its bid.

Last summer, Hestness beamed a notice of sale through the "early notification system," an antiquated listserv the city uses for land deals initiated by unsolicited offers. The city, he announced, would give Madison Equities a \$27,500 write-down.

The notice wound up in real estate developer John Mannillo's inbox. He owned several downtown buildings in decades past, but now filled his days working with a litany of neighborhood committees, including the government watchdog group St. Paul Strong. It annoyed him to see Madison Equities chisel 90 percent of the value from a slice of public land.

He accused the Housing Redevelopment Authority of being a poor steward of the people's property. The city challenged Mannillo to vote with his own dollars if he so believed in the plaza's potential.

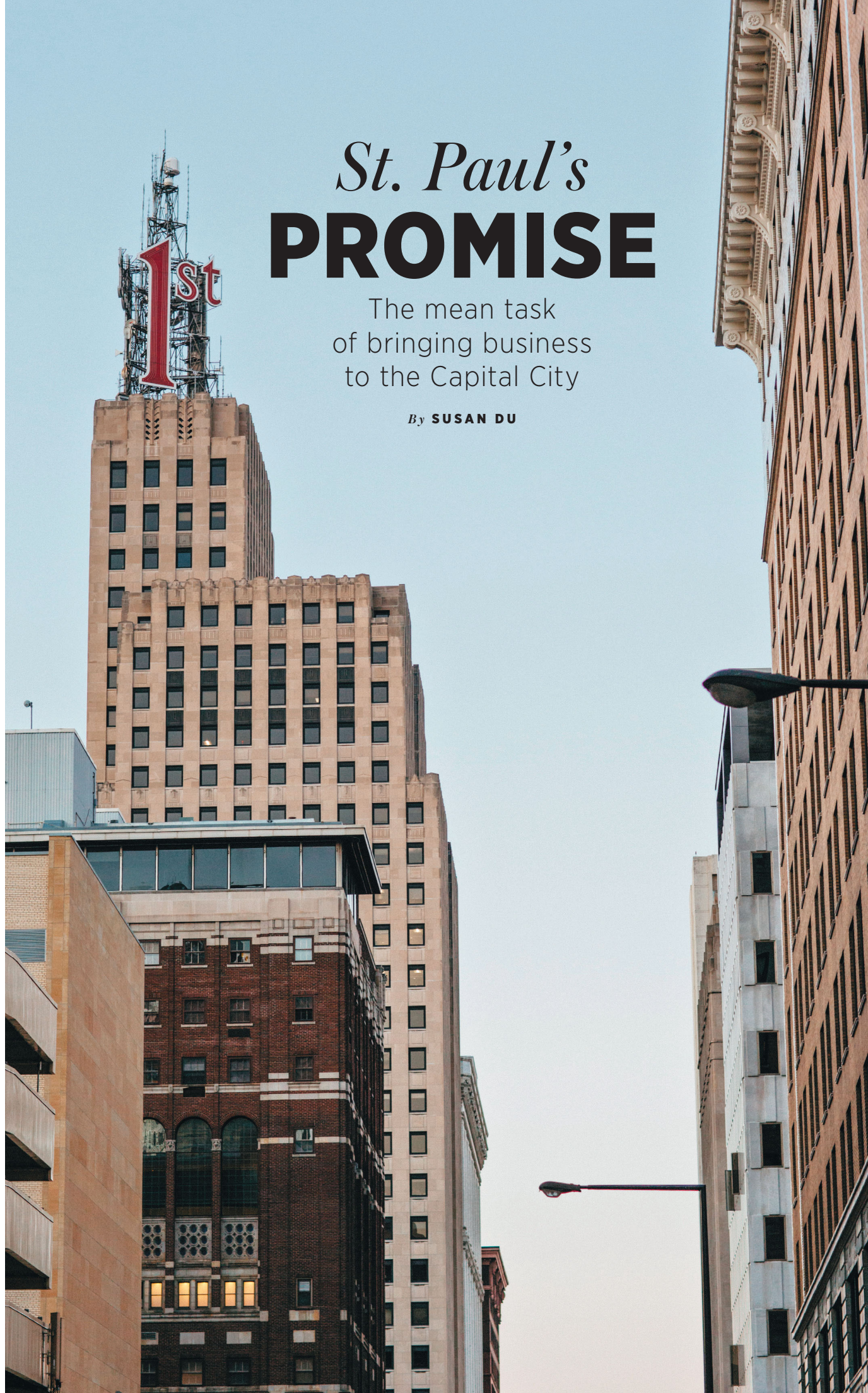
Feeling confrontational, he bid the full \$30,000, piecing together a plan to renovate the plaza into a food truck court. Downtown suffered from a dearth of good ice cream, he argued, hoping to force Madison Equities' hand.

"It just irritates me—because I'm a St. Paul person, I live here, I pay taxes here, my career has been here—to see the city mismanaged," he says. "Downtown is

St. Paul's PROMISE

The mean task
of bringing business
to the Capital City

By SUSAN DU



struggling. Why are we getting ourselves constantly into a worse situation?”

To Mannillo, 375 N. Robert St. was a microcosm of systemic threats keeping St. Paul down—the perpetual underestimation of its assets, and the bottom feeders doing business on the cheap with little consideration for the city’s health.

Suddenly faced with competing offers for what was supposed to be a throwaway parcel, the city retreated to mull its options.

II.

Undervalued, underrated, overlooked

Powerhouses Ecolab, Securian, and Travelers all call downtown St. Paul home. But a truer barometer for corporate investment is the rental office market, which reflects persistent kinks in the capital city’s economic engine.

St. Paul’s total universe of competitive office space is shrinking. Since 2005, it’s shed 1.3 million square feet due to tear-downs and conversions to other uses, such as housing. Meanwhile, downtown’s newest office building is Infor Commons, built in 1999.

Despite diminishing supply, office vacancies hover stubbornly around 20 percent—one of the highest rates in the

metro. Its rental prices, when adjusted for inflation, are decreasing. That these depressed statistics have persisted in today’s piping hot market is cause for self-reflection, says Julie Bauch of the real estate firm Bauch Enterprises, past chair of the Building Owners and Managers Association. St. Paul should be benefiting from the business activity transpiring elsewhere in the metro, pumped by low interest rates and full employment.

Lee Krueger, president of the St. Paul Port Authority, a government development agency, views Minneapolis and St. Paul to be more fraternal than identical twins, fundamentally incomparable. Whereas Minneapolis has pursued ruthless redevelopment strategies to sometimes aesthetically questionable ends, St. Paul has preserved more of its classic buildings.

Yet that’s created some critical obstacles to attracting the same level of investment,

luxury dining in the Twin Cities, Minneapolis poses formidable allure.

“Employers and businesses want to go where their employees want to be, and people want to work in Minneapolis,” says Pete DuFour, VP of office leasing at Colliers International, who’s noticed that much real estate activity in St. Paul consists of tenants shuffling from one building to another, rather than bringing in new business from afar.

“If you’re 24 years old, getting out of college, it’s more fun and cool to go work in Minneapolis than St. Paul.”

III.

A bedroom beyond the river

To offset the scarcity of interested tenants, many downtown office buildings are being retrofitted as apartments.

Urban planning groups such as the International Downtown Association say 10 percent of St. Paul’s total population—or 30,000 people—should reside downtown. About 10,000 currently do, a sign of unmet potential.

The broker community generally agrees there’s no better fate for bygone buildings with little commercial interest. The old post office and the original Pioneer Press

“DOWNTOWN IS STRUGGLING. WHY ARE WE GETTING OURSELVES CONSTANTLY INTO A WORSE SITUATION?”

Across the river, Minneapolis is delivering new offices and trading towers, gaining more than 1 million square feet in the past five years. Suburban businesses gravitate to downtown’s fitness centers, rooftop patios, and co-working spaces. Farmers markets and food trucks pull feet to the street. The Downtown Improvement District employs a brigade of friendly ambassadors keeping sidewalks clean and visitors oriented.

Krueger says. Much of St. Paul’s aging stock is structurally obsolete. Growing businesses seek larger footprints than it has to offer.

As a government town, St. Paul also hosts state agencies prioritizing rock-bottom rents over modernity or environmental design.

And despite St. Paul’s old-world feel, glittering music halls, relative affordability, and some of the best hole-in-the wall and



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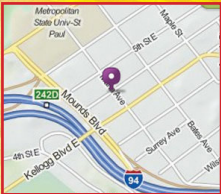
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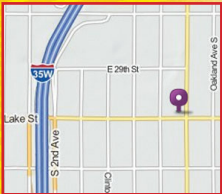
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WYLD has been manufacturing cannabis edibles from their kitchens in Oregon, California and Nevada since 2015. In the time since the 2018 Farm Bill that legalized hemp, they've turned their efforts and know-how to a new enterprise, WYLD CBD. [1]

WYLD CBD has been using cross-trained cooks, familiar with the processes of the nation's second-largest edible gummy producer in the U.S., to make simply the best, most consistent CBD gummy treats on the market today.

An eye for specifics and cutting edge production processes are what maintains WYLD CBD's proven quality.

Among these precautions is an extensive testing regime and a particular production process for WYLD CBD's gummies.

WYLD's source for hemp and hemp processing is licensed by the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture, and their product is tested there for its first time. When the raw product gets to WYLD CBD, it goes through its second round test for trace-THC levels and a number of other substances within the hemp compound.

The gummies receive their third and final internal screening at WYLD CBD after each batch is completed. During this stage, water levels within the gummies are particularly important, as water content more than anything else determines how likely a gummy is to mold, thus determining its shelf life.

WYLD CBD wholesale account manager Myles Petretti-Seamon said that another aspect that sets the products apart is their unique approach to mixing in their hemp during the gummy cooking process, not before or after the gummies are created by dusting them with or folding them around the hemp additive.

Petretti-Seamon said this is only made possible by having cooks with years in the business of creating cannabis gummies and WYLD CBD's special, pharmaceutical-grade mixer to allow for this process to happen.

"We focus on consistency, reliability and real fruit flavors," Petretti-Seamon said. "Each of our gummies is sure to have exactly 25 mg of CBD because of how we manufacture our product."

Currently, WYLD CBD offers gummies in raspberry, blackberry, huckleberry and lemon flavors centered on reaching a better taste than many competitors' edibles. Come try them at Nothing But Hemp!

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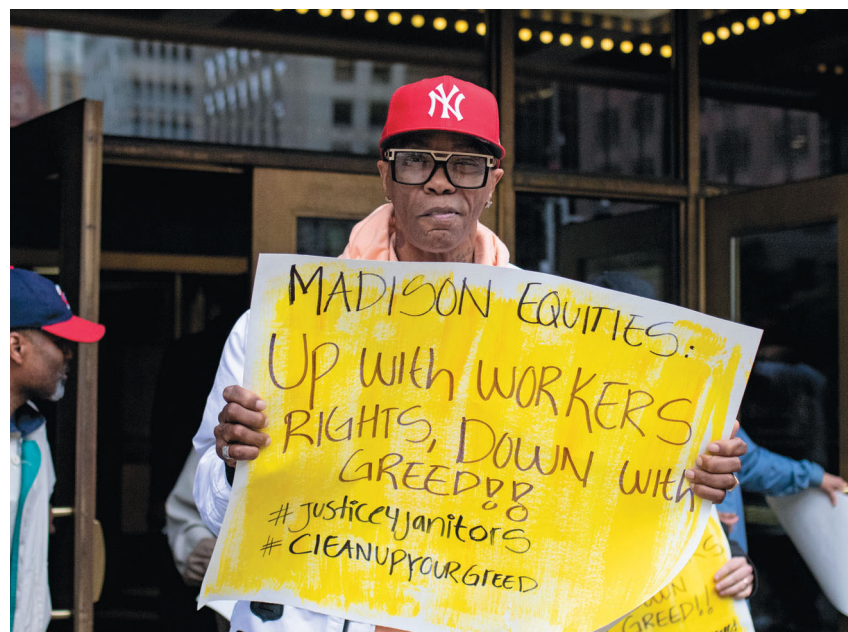
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SUSAN DU

newsroom are living distinctive second lives as trendy apartments. Several others have followed suit with conversions of varying intention and success.

Developers are scrambling to meet the Twin Cities' insatiable housing demand, says Mike Zipko, who manages public affairs for developers. "The market has got a greater demand for residential right now, unfortunately, than commercial space."

Which comes at a cost.

The state taxes residential space at just half the rate of commercial per dollar of value, says Mark Haveman of the Minnesota Center for Fiscal Excellence, a government spending researcher. That means residential conversions reduce funding for city services and schools.

In 2016, the Minnesota Supreme Court gutted one of St. Paul's vital revenue streams when it ruled the city's practice of charging downtown churches street maintenance fees was unconstitutional.

The city argued nonprofits should help pay for the same roads and services everybody uses—especially in a town where one-third of properties are tax-exempt—to no avail.

Moreover, policy think tank Citizens League studied the long-held claim that St. Paul was overburdened with nonprofits and found it untrue. It has no more than Minneapolis or Duluth. Still, its remaining tax base isn't as productive due to its residential-commercial blend, forcing the city to work two to three times harder, Haveman says.

The Local Government Aid program is another measure of prosperity. Each year, the Twin Cities collectively pay more than \$2 billion in state taxes, intensely subsidizing the rural reaches of Minnesota. A portion of that returns to Minneapolis and St. Paul.

According to a complex Department of Revenue formula, Minneapolis has a

In June and July, union janitors picketed Madison Equities buildings, alleging the company exploits workers.

greater "need" for services than St. Paul because more of its homes were built prior to 1940, and more suburban commuters use its roads. Yet the state gives St. Paul more than 10 percent of its taxes back, while Minneapolis receives only 5.6 percent. Minneapolis, with its booming development and density of jobs, is calculably more capable of taking care of itself.

The confluence of these trends—years of stagnation in outside investment, lost office space, and diminishing tax capacity—is driving St. Paul into an economic bind, says Jack Hoeschler, a developer and lawyer who represented churches in their lawsuit against the city.

He points to the housing conversions in Lowertown, which is "terrific from a downtown vitality point of view." Yet the economic impact on the city and public is to actually reduce the tax-paying capacity of that property, he says.

"Indeed, there is recognition that St. Paul is a large neighborhood east of downtown Minneapolis."

IV.

The man who owns St. Paul

St. Paul faces another peculiar challenge. There's just one major landlord downtown: 75-year-old Jim Crockarell of Madison Equities. By purchasing property when it falls on hard times, he's amassed an empire of 18 buildings spanning 3 million square feet.

The crown jewels of Madison Equities' portfolio are also St. Paul's most iconic buildings: U.S. Bank Center, the Alliance Bank Building, and the First National Bank

Tower with its gleaming “1st” sign. Under Crockarell’s management, these buildings advertise some of the lowest rental rates in town, according to the Building Owners and Managers Association’s annual surveys. It’s a point of contention among competing landlords trying to maintain a certain standard of value.

Lately, Crockarell has been trying to answer the clarion call of residential conversion. Several Madison Equities buildings, including the east tower of First National Bank, have been slated for transformation.

“We’ll see if we get anywhere,” says Jim Stolpestad, founder of Exeter Group, who likens Crockarell to Donald Trump. “Some people think that Crockarell is part of the problem with downtown St. Paul.”

Crockarell is building a big enough machine that his name has become indi-

SEIU accuses Madison Equities’ contractor, ROC Commercial Cleaning, of minimizing wages in order to outbid more ethical companies, and skirting labor standards by using workers hired off the books by even smaller subcontractors. The Department of Labor, which investigates direct employers, hasn’t substantiated complaints against ROC.

Crockarell denies the implication that he’s anti-union. His choices are pragmatic, not personal, he says.

“We don’t have any notion of whether a union or a non-union company is better. We’d be very happy to have a union company if they could demonstrate they were a quality company at a very competitive price. So far, we just haven’t found that match.”

Crockarell’s intra-family strife has also spilled over into business. In 2014, Madison

“IF YOU’RE 24 YEARS OLD, GETTING OUT OF COLLEGE, IT’S MORE FUN AND COOL TO GO WORK IN MINNEAPOLIS THAN ST. PAUL.”

visible from the market. Some within the broker community hope he’ll embrace his influence and give more to special events like the Winter Carnival, and opt in on their collective efforts to keep downtown’s streets and parks clean.

But so far, he seems more the traditional developer, focused on projects that make sense to him rather than the city at large, says the Port Authority’s Lee Krueger. “I would love to see him be more involved like some of the other St. Paul landlords and participate in city initiatives and participate more in, you know, the culture of the city.”

At least among some, Cockarell doesn’t have a reputation for playing well with others.

When 39-year-old Claudia Ibarra first heard of Madison Equities, it was 2013, and she was cleaning bathrooms at U.S. Bank Center eight hours a day.

Rumors traveled among St. Paul’s cleaners as Madison Equities bought up buildings and replaced union workers with every acquisition. When the company purchased U.S. Bank Center, Ibarra moved to First National Bank. Soon it too became Madison Equities’.

Instead of a job with health care, sick leave, and vacation, Ibarra wound up on the Service Employees International Union’s (SEIU) layoff list, looking for jobs beyond St. Paul.

“He has taken away the work of many people. He has sent them far from their homes,” Ibarra says of Cockarell. “He has damaged the economy of the poor.”

Equities sued Crockarell’s son and longtime business partner, Rob Crockarell, over nonpayment of \$100,000 father and step-mother once loaned him to buy a house.

Rob argued there were no attempts to collect the debt for almost eight years. His parents only called it in to prevent him from suing the family business for a buyout, according to Rob’s affidavit.

He lost that lawsuit, but initiated another revealing court war. Rob accused his father of overcharging tenants, maintaining his broker license by having others mark his attendance in continuing real estate classes, and misclassifying employees as independent contractors.

Rob couldn’t stomach these “unethical” practices, according to his affidavit. “I wanted to be able to make decisions for myself and manage my own business, instead of having to accept decisions that I disagreed with.”

Meanwhile, a whistleblower leaked confidential company information to Madison Equities’ tenants. According to court records, emails addressed from “union-jobsmatter” accused Crockarell of cutting building costs by firing union cleaners, yet failing to adjust tenants’ leases in kind, allowing him to pocket millions. Crockarell insisted the allegations were false.

Another dispute arose between Crockarell and restaurateurs Joe Kasel and Kevin Geisen, who owned Eagle Street Grille and Fitzgerald’s, formerly known as Salt Cellar. Born and bred in St. Paul to big Catholic families, they were well-known small-business owners.



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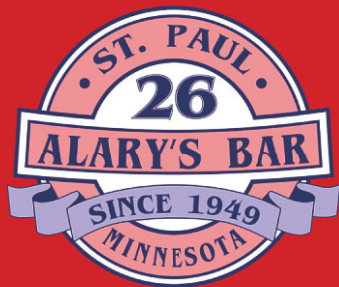
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In 2015, a limited liability company registered to Crockarell's wife extended a \$2.4 million loan for Kasel and Geisen to build a third restaurant, Ox Cart Ale House, inside Madison Equities' Stadium Ramp building in Lowertown. It would offer casual American fare with a rooftop bar overlooking CHS Field.

A year later, the landlord took Kasel and Geisen to court, accusing them of dodging rent. The restauranteurs cried foul. Crockarell had told them not to worry about rent while Ox Cart closed that winter to restructure, they argued in court.

The company didn't dispute this. Rather, its lawyer argued the men shouldn't have relied on alleged oral agreements when their written contract clearly entitled the company to collect all \$2.4 million of its loan, plus back rent, in the event of a default.

Ultimately, Madison Equities' hospital-ity group swallowed Kasel and Geisen's three restaurants.

These cases didn't go to trial, and didn't have findings of fact to parse Madison Equities' treatment of tenants. Still, the episode left St. Paul's broker community leery of Madison Equities' tactics.

"We're an ethical company," Crockarell says. "We follow all the rules and regulations, we pay all our bills, and I think most people in St. Paul respect us as being a very credible company."

As one of Ramsey County's biggest taxpayers, Madison Equities employs 400 people and provides downtown St. Paul with assorted dining and entertainment, Crockarell says. He challenges his detractors to show they've done the same.

V.

Conscious capitalism

When Chamber of Commerce President B Kyle considers the spate of bold new developments on St. Paul's horizon, all signs point to a glorious renaissance.

Los Angeles developer AECOM has proposed four skyline-transforming river-front towers including more than a million square feet of office space. Kraus-Anderson wants to consolidate St. Paul's scattered state agencies on a new government campus resurrected from the bones of an old Sears store near the Capitol. Minneapolis' Ryan Companies is building an ambitious complex of office, retail, and housing on more than 120 acres in Highland Park where Ford once manufactured trucks.

The problem with St. Paul has more to do with "narrative" than fact, Kyle claims, encouraging brokers to recognize the city's chronic underdevelopment as an opportunity.

Though she cannot say who these developers are or when they might reveal their

plans, Kyle promises a slew of investors are St. Paul-bound.

"The economy is still good and continuing to grow," Kyle says. "I'm not even being Pollyanna. That's really good news for what's going on in St. Paul."

Still, brokers have doubts. New development poses new challenges. State agencies currently renting downtown may vacate for the Sears site. They wonder how AECOM will fill a 40-story tower with the business muscle to justify construction costs. Ryan has asked St. Paul for \$107 million in tax subsidies, suggesting development of one of the Midwest's most desirable parcels wouldn't be possible but for financial aid.

Some suggest St. Paul's landlords could make tangible improvements by hiring professional security, keeping grounds swept, and their skyways properly cooled in summer, heated in winter.

Without naming names, most landlords don't manage their properties well, says Mike Salmen of real estate firm Transwestern, who believes downtown St. Paul already has all the qualities it needs to attract tenants, but lacks building owners willing to open their wallets.

"For a long time—and it's probably true today—it's an exception to the rule if you're investing heavily in your building amenities and common areas," he says. "To the extent that buildings in downtown St. Paul start to do that, they'll start to see occupancy rates increase, they'll see rental rates increase."

When brokers talk about admirable developers practicing faith in St. Paul, certain names recur. There's Pat Wolf, who reinvented the former Woolworth's store as a verdant co-working space charging market-defying rents. They also cite Rich Pakonen of the inspired Osborn370.

The tower used to house Ecolab's headquarters, built for a single occupant in 1968. Its floor plates are small, a seemingly insurmountable obstacle typical of downtown St. Paul.

Pakonen is a housing developer. Partners Clint Blaiser, Tanya Bell, Schafer Richardson, Scott Burns, and John Bergstrom are all successful entrepreneurs of varying real estate experience. Their St. Paul roots run deep. Osborn370 was conceived from the hypothesis that, despite Minneapolis' long shadow, St. Paul can supply what the business world demands.

Using 100 percent union labor, the consortium took the building apart and put it back together. Today, the floors feel spacious. The views are panoramic. A common lounge flaunts all the posh hallmarks of a creative corporate environment to which ping-pong-playing young upstarts invariably gravitate.

To underscore the unsubtle ideology of the building, the ground floor coffee shop is a Beanyful—a job-training enterprise of the West Side nonprofit Neighborhood House, which has been



ZOE PRINDS-FLASH

assisting immigrants and refugees since the 19th century.

Capitalism and social good needn't be mutually exclusive concepts, Pakonen insists.

One of his first tenants was Blake Bristow of Reeher, a data startup that helps universities fundraise. Boasting 30 percent annual growth and a metastasizing workforce, he scoured the Twin Cities for a headquarters.

Most tech workers may be based in Minneapolis, but Reeher's new hires are typically graduates of St. Thomas University and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire—the east metro's college pipeline. So Bristow chose Osborn370, where he could carve out a niche.

"We saw how these guys were trying to bring 'why' to the table, create a powerhouse of tech in St. Paul, which was our vision," he says. "We wanted to get around that."

In St. Paul, likability plays an inextricable role in business, says Ted Davis, a com-

The St. Paul Downtown Alliance's Streets of Summer program is trying to bring life to barren public spaces.

munications consultant who promoted Osborn370.

"If all you're doing is looking for the lowest price, you'll put up with a lot of things," he says. "If you're looking for quality, if you're looking for what you want to tie yourself to, a good reputation, you'll do other things."

VI. The most livable city in America

To overhaul old prejudices about the city, St. Paul's Downtown Alliance has been studying the feasibility of launching a business improvement district mirroring that of Minneapolis—a private-sector lift to keep the streets safe,

clean, and green. This summer, it booked a fleet of art and music exhibitions to "surprise and delight" key intersections.

"When we look at other cities across the country, we see that literally every city larger than St. Paul has an improvement district in their downtown," says Alliance president Joe Spencer. Board members include some of St. Paul's most prominent CEOs. The game plan involves deploying them to spread the gospel.

Yet permanent programming would require buy-in from a majority of downtown building owners, per state law. Jim Crockarell believes "the jury's still out" as to whether he'll participate.

"We're trying to educate him," says Jim Stolpestad of Exeter Group, who advocates an improvement district with or without St. Paul's biggest landlord because "clearly something should be done." Minneapolis may have a united Downtown Improvement District, but there are other examples of gerrymandered districts, he says. "We could draw the boundaries around him."

Last month, more than a year after Crockarell and rival developer John Mannillo began sparring over the 375 N. Robert St. plaza, the matter finally came before the city's Housing and Redevelopment committee for a vote. By then, Crockarell had submitted a new bid for \$32,500, and city staff wanted to accept it. They just couldn't envision the food truck court of Mannillo's dreams.

Mannillo claimed the city denied him the opportunity to bid higher, and ignored his proposal offering Madison Equities the option of leasing the land.

Property manager Rick Rossie spoke for Madison Equities. The company didn't realize the parcel's worth when it made its initial offer of \$2,500, he claimed. Regardless, Madison Equities had since become the higher bidder with the better proposal to create a patio for a long-vacant restaurant space.

Council member Jane Prince, who represents the East Side, asked Rossie to take a message home:

"We would love to see you being more responsive to the needs of our city in terms of quality and property management," she said pointedly. "I want the city to be more intentional about looking for buyers on property that we own, and I want to do business with entities that are invested in the health and vitality of downtown."

Yet Rebecca Noecker, the council member who represents downtown, backed the sale to Madison Equities. The committee followed suit, requesting the company commit to the city's interests—including preserving public access to the skyway—in writing before finalizing a deal.

Afterward, Mannillo lingered in the hall with his hands stuffed in his pockets, wearing a bemused smile.

"At least I made the city \$30,000," he said with a sigh. ☐

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BY DOUG MACK

Consider the Pronto Pup. Back in 1947, it was the very first food on a stick at the Minnesota State Fair, a novelty with immediate, obvious appeal: functionality and unpretentious goofiness. Stuff-on-sticks soon became the defining, enduring culinary stunt of the fair, from spaghetti-on-a-stick to wine-glazed deep-fried meatloaf-on-a-stick—which was a real thing in 2013.

Today there are more than 80 foods-on-sticks at the fair, according to Nikki Hines, the fair's Attractions and Food Concessions supervisor. They're still selling well. They're reliable standbys. And yet, when it comes to the list of new foods, they're remarkably absent. Last year, there were just three, including charcuterie-on-a-stick and an impaled-fruit concoction called sangria-on-a-stick, neither of which earn points for ingenuity or technical difficulty. Among this year's debutantes, the stick-count is down to two.

But if the gimmick of skewered food has run its course, a different trend has been building over the last several years, as both the fair and fair-goers have embraced a more global menu. This year, that includes stuffed cabbage rolls, Turkish pizza, Cuban fusion fajitas, a carnitas taco cone, and Nordic waffles al pastor. If you're feeling generous with the "global" label, you might also count the Cheesy Sriracha Funnell Cake Bites.

I'm here for all of it. Yeah, some of them seem to have been dreamed up by a bored (or drunk) line cook playing culinary Mad Libs. They're no one's definition of authentic or traditional. But such absurdity and spectacle is the glory of the State Fair—what with its butterheads and mega-pumpkins and llama costume contest. Moreover, cultural mash-ups are a hell of a lot more intriguing than yet another stick-concoction, whose only real trick is not falling to the ground.

The fair's media relations department has records of its press releases for new foods only back to 2012, but even within that window, you can see the evolution of how and what we eat. There have been plenty of variations on the Pronto Pup, but much of the buzz has been about things like beef tongue caramelos, lamb testicles, camel burger sliders, Persian Kabob Koo-bideh, chilaquiles, pierogis, and cultural mash-ups like kimchi-and-curry poutine and (a personal favorite) the Carpe Diem, a fish-shaped buttermilk miso waffle cone filled with balsamic-roasted strawberry compote and vanilla ice cream.

SO LONG, STICKS!

The Fair Foods They Are a-Changin'



Farmers Union Coffee Shop's
blueberry key lime pie

THE MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

A few broader cultural shifts are at play here. Harris points to the rise of food trucks and food-centered television shows. "We and our vendors are keeping tabs on what the next generation of foodies are requesting," she said in an email. There's also the social-media hype machine, with its thirst for listicles and OMG WHAT IS THIS shareable content. You want to stand out at the fair? Best make it memorable.

Perhaps most important, though, is the change in vendors. Many of the most attention-grabbing and delicious dishes have come from stands that are themselves relative newcomers. There are only a handful of openings for new food vendors each year—only five in 2018, and seven this year, chosen from about 500 applicants.

Ever since the Midtown Global Market got its fair stand in 2008, occupied by a rotating roster of the Minneapolis land-

mark's own tenants, it's been a reliable source of intriguing new foods. The Carpe Diem, for example, was the work of the late, great Rabbit Hole, while Hot Indian also had a run of inspired fare like Tikka-on-a-Stikka and Paneer-on-a-Spear, proving that sticks still have their place. Global Market stalwarts Holy Land and Manny's Tortas each have their own spots elsewhere on the fairgrounds, with plenty of intriguing offerings over the years—somewhere on the internet, there's a photo of your author wearing a paper pig-ear hat from the Swine Barn and drinking one of Manny's virgin piña coladas, which are served in a pineapple and demand a photo or 10.

The globalization of State Fair food is also, undeniably, an indication of how the Great Minnesota Get-Together has changed over the years, much like the state itself. The fair is hardly some perfect,

harmonious microcosm representing the state, but it's about as close as you'll find in one specific location. Plenty of old-school features endure—the blue-ribbon quilts and the 4-H kids grooming Holsteins and the whirling terrors at the Midway—but the place and people and cultures evolve together.

That's all good. It's great.

This past June, the New York Times ran a dispatch from St. Cloud about the city's growing Somali community and the anti-immigrant blowhards trying to run them out of town because of some racist "white replacement" conspiracy nonsense. It was infuriating for many reasons, starting with the hostility directed at refugees who are just trying to live their damn lives, but also because it highlighted a narrow, utterly wrong view of history and who Minnesotans are, collectively. The Lake Wobegon caricature—white, Lutheran, small-town—was never an accurate representation of us, but it's become even more cringingly archaic over the past few decades, as Somali, Southeast Asian, and Latinx immigrant communities (among others) have grown and made their mark across the state—including the State Fair. We're long overdue for a more expansive definition of what it means to be Minnesotan.

Back at the fair, two years ago, there was a brief public outcry when news broke that the Original Deep-Fried Cheese Curd stand was closing after 42 years of operation. The owners were retiring, due to health concerns, and wanted to pass it on to their son, but fair policy prohibited transfer of ownership. "We generally appreciate the longevity of the prior operator," the fair's deputy general manager told KARE 11 at the time, "but we want to look in a new direction if that opportunity presents itself. There will still be plenty of cheese curds on the fairgrounds."

That's the right attitude, particularly given the low turnover of food stands. Let the fair change, let newcomers have their say. Every square inch of the fairgrounds is embedded with meaning for thousands of people. It's good to have familiar classics that never go away. The Pronto Pup is still around, all over the place. But it's also okay for folks to get nudged out of their comfort zones, to try new flavors beyond variations of stuff on a stick. Let new classics prove themselves, let new vendors try their hands at being part of the spectacle, and let new audiences experience the delirium of a long, satisfying day at the fair, snacks in hand throughout. **Q**

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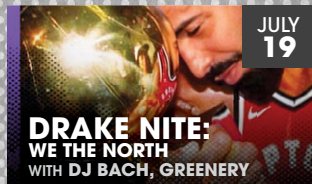
JULY 27

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JULY 19



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JULY 20



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JULY 22



**90s
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JULY 27



**FLIP PHONE XXL:
SHORT SHORTS**
STARRING SCARLET ENVY

AUG 02



IDLES
WITH A PLACE TO BURY STRANGERS

AUG 03



DEAN LEWIS
WITH JAMES TW

AUG 06



GOJIRA

AUG 09



**KAMASI
WASHINGTON**

AUG 11

PALACE THEATRE



**LAST PODCAST
ON THE LEFT**

AUG 08



PHANTOGRAM
WITH BOB MOSES

AUG 25



TYCHO
WITH POOLSIDE

SEPT 13



**BRITTANY
HOWARD
OF ALABAMA SHAKES**

SEPT 19



**BLACKBERRY
SMOKE**
WITH THE RECORD COMPANY

SEPT 26

PALACE THEATRE (CONT.)



ANDREW BIRD
WITH MADISON CUNNINGHAM

SEPT 27



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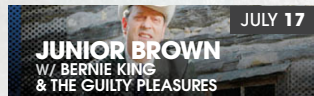
SEPT 07



**CRIMINAL
PODCAST -
LIVE SHOW**

SEPT 22

FINE LINE



JUNIOR BROWN
W/ BERNIE KING
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JULY 17



TORCHE
W/ THE WOLF COUNCIL,
CRASH CUDDLE

JULY 25



**GRAVEYARD CLUB
AND THE OCEAN BLUE**
ALBUM RELEASES
W/ DJ JAKE RUDH

JULY 26



THE MARIAS
W/ PAUL CHERRY

JULY 27



**BACK TO BLACK:
AMY WINEHOUSE TRIBUTE**
FT. REMEMBER JONES

AUG 01



JAMESTOWN REVIVAL
W/ JOHN CRAIGIE

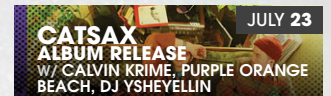
AUG 03

7TH ST ENTRY



THE JAUNTEE
W/ CIRCLE OF HEAT

JULY 18



**CATSAX
ALBUM RELEASE**
W/ CALVIN KRIME, PURPLE ORANGE
BEACH, DJ YSHEYELLIN

JULY 23



**J. PLAZA
RELEASE SHOW**
W/ DADDY DINERO, BABY SHEL, AND MORE

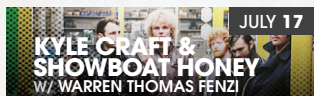
JULY 19



DRUGDEALER
W/ SUMMER CAROLS (BEATLES SET)

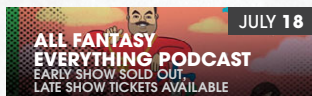
JULY 24

TURF CLUB



**KYLE CRAFT &
SHOWBOAT HONEY**
W/ WARREN THOMAS FENZI

JULY 17



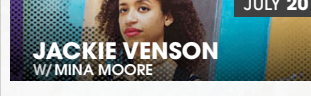
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JULY 18



TRAILER TRASH

JULY 19



JACKIE VENSON
W/ MINA MOORE

JULY 20



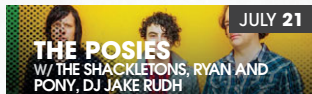
**THE SEA THE SEA +
FREDDY & FRANCINE**
W/ RACHAEL KILGOUR

JULY 25



PLANET BOOTY
W/ KARATE CHOP, SILENCE
AND BadNrad

JULY 20



THE POSIES
W/ THE SHACKLETONS, RYAN AND
PONY, DJ JAKE RUDH

JULY 21



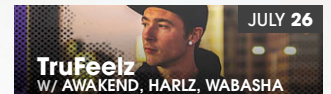
#FREESOTA BENEFIT
W/ MUJA MESSIAH, MARIA ISA,
MAYDA, ORKO ELOHEIM & MORE

JULY 23



THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN
W/ LOGAN MICHAELS, WILL ROBINSON,
TAY THE AIR NOMAD, & MORE

JULY 21



TruFeelz
W/ AWAKEND, HARLZ, WABASHA

JULY 26

AROUND TOWN



**GO SHOW #17:
BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY**
W/ SHREDDERS, RED POETS SOCIETY
CABOOZE OUTDOOR PLAZA

JULY 19



NEW YEARS DAY
W/ PLAGUE OF STARS, TIME KEEPER
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL

JULY 29



GARY CLARK JR.
SURLY BREWING FESTIVAL FIELD

AUG 09



JEN KIRKMAN
THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

AUG 10



TUXEDO
THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

AUG 14

A LIST

THURSDAY Bike Night at Mia p. 19

FRIDAY Modist drops in on the skate scene p. 19

SATURDAY Art at Minnehaha Falls p. 21

David Byrne takes a trip to a strange Texas town in 1986's *True Stories*.



WARNER BROS./PHOTOFEST © WARNER BROS.

WEDNESDAY 7.17

FESTIVAL

NATIONAL PUPPETRY FESTIVAL

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The 2019 National Puppetry Festival is heading to the University of Minnesota campus for performances, workshops, films, live podcast tapings, a puppetry exhibition, a puppetry store, and a National Puppet Slam featuring short-form puppetry. Among the performances will be pieces by national and international companies, as well as artists from the Twin Cities. There will be marionettes, Turkish shadow theater, masks, DIY electronics, hand and rod puppets, and live music, as the puppetry artists ruminate on philosophical themes,

question sociopolitical plights, use art to investigate scientific questions, and have some silly fun. With a wide array of styles and artistic traditions, the festival has an intriguing variety of work from award-winning artists. Find details at puppeteers.org. While prices for the full festival experience are steep, many individual happenings and events are free or low-cost.

Through Sunday —SHEILA REGAN

COMEDY

JOE ZIMMERMAN

ACME COMEDY CO.

"I still talk about things I'm interested in and things I'm curious about," comedian Joe Zimmerman says of his current set. "Right now I'm watching that documentary on Netflix called *One*

Strange Rock. It's about how amazing our planet is and where it came from." It's narrated by eight former astronauts, as well as actor Will Smith. "On one hand, I'm blown away by how amazing our planet is, and on the other hand, I want to be friends with Will Smith. He's very charismatic." Zimmerman has also channeled his curiosity into a new podcast, called *A Great Listening Experience*, in which he studies a topic and looks for what he calls the upside. "Depression, for example," he says. "Turns out there are some benefits to depression." When not satisfying his curiosity, he plays guitar. "I do that to relax," he says. "I strum in the afternoon and chill out. I definitely don't play with anyone watching, and I definitely don't do it to impress any girls." 8 p.m.

Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$15-\$18. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday —P.F. WILSON**

FILM

DAVID BYRNE: TRUE STORIES

WALKER ART CENTER

David Byrne's 1986 cult-classic film about a fictional Texas town named Virgil is screening at the Walker this week. Inspired by tabloid headlines, *True Stories* jumps from malls to nightclubs to small-town fashion shows—featuring luxurious grass suits, decadent headpieces, and camouflage outfits—with a deadpan aloofness and absurdist charm. Byrne narrates, while actors Spalding Gray, Swoosie Kurtz,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19 ►

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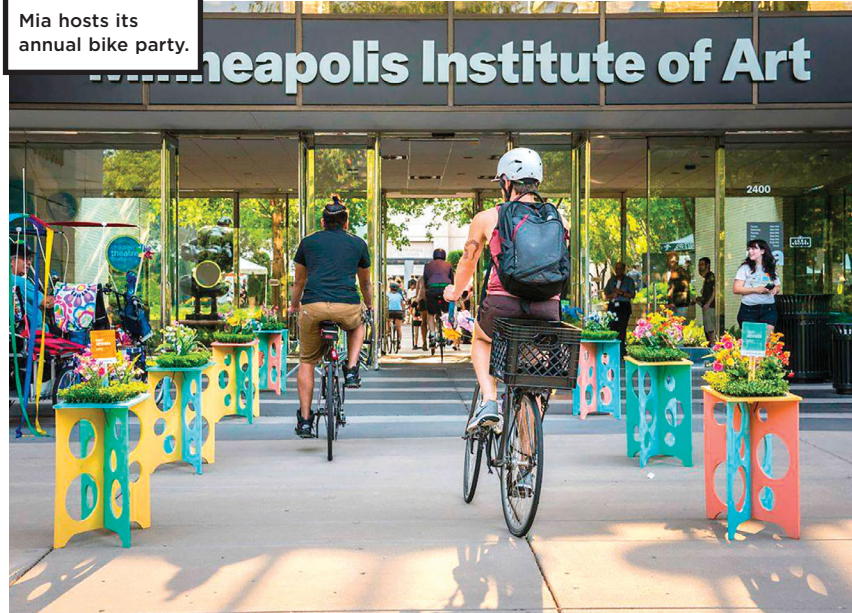


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Mia hosts its annual bike party.



COURTESY OF MIA

CONTINUED FROM WEDNESDAY ►

John Goodman, and gospel singer Pops Staples make appearances. The films' soundtrack features the Talking Heads, as well as avant-garde musicians like Meredith Monk, Kronos Quartet, and Tito Larriva. In 2018, Byrne helped restore the work, adding surround sound. The screening is part of the Walker's Lost Films & Restorations series, which lovingly presents independent cinematic masterpieces. 7 p.m. Wednesday and Friday. \$10. 725 Vineland Place, Minneapolis; 612-375-7600. **Also Friday —SHEILA REGAN**

THURSDAY 7.18

THEATER

INBOX@ARTBOX 2019

OFF-LEASH AREA

A collection of dance works by Twin Cities independent choreographers returns to Off-Leash Area's ArtBox this week. Inbox@ArtBox debuted last summer. Founded by Sarah Hauss, the series showcases choreographers selected by a panel of dance curators. Each evening celebrates a range of dance styles found in the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota area. Watch out for "You Can Touch Me Here," a new dance featuring two duets by the fearless Jennifer Glaws, as well as work by Tori Casagrande, Lily Conforti, Samantha Heggem, Julianna Johnson, Zoe Koenig, Jose Luis, Alys Ayumi Ogura, Jill Patterson, Charlotte Vail, and Christian Warner. We may have lost a number of performance spaces and venues in the past few years, but the spirit of independent dance in this town lives

on with programming like this. 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. \$10-\$30 sliding scale. 4200 E. 54th St., Minneapolis; 612-724-7372.

Through Saturday —SHEILA REGAN

BIKES

THIRD THURSDAY: BIKE NIGHT

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART

Mia's annual bike party returns this week for a free evening of bike-related fun. Cyclists will be able to cruise right through the museum's doors, where they'll be greeted with a variety of things to check out. Local groups like Nice Ride Minnesota, the Midtown Greenway Coalition, and ARTCRANK will be organizing safety sessions, showing off new gear, and hosting art-making opportunities. Music will be provided by R&B/pop makers Circa 93 and jazz/punk artists 26 BATS!. A cash bar will keep the drinks flowing, and food truck Samurai Teppanyaki will stop by. 6 to 9 p.m. Free. 2400 Third Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-870-3131. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

FRIDAY 7.19

ARTS/BARHOPPING

ARTEPILS 2019

UTEPILS BREWING CO.

Utepils' brewery is located in one of the most idyllic settings anybody could ask for. With Bassett Creek nearby and a newly opened beer garden, it's a perfect summer location for a European-style lager on a hot day. This weekend, Utepils will show off why its beer garden is such a vibrant addition with Artepils, a two-day showcase of local artists, live tunes, and food trucks.

Friday's lineup includes rockers Javier Trejo Band and Eldon Hagen, while Saturday's concert is all covers, with the Watkins Glen Summer Jam '73 Tribute bringing songs by the Band, the Allman Brothers, and the Grateful Dead to life. 4 to 9 p.m. Friday; noon to 9 p.m. Saturday. Free. 225 Thomas Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-249-7800.

Through Saturday —LOREN GREEN

BARHOPPING

DROP IN

MODIST BREWING COMPANY

This Friday, Modist in the North Loop is turning into a skatepark, concert venue, and an art gallery—all at the same time. The folks from local skate shop Cal Surf will be setting up shop in the back of the warehouse space, showing off their moves while revelers drink beer. Over 75 artists have created rad skate-deck art, which will be on view (and available for purchase) for the next few weeks. The party will all be set to live tunes from a killer lineup that includes surf rock from the Swongos, hip-hop from Sean Anonymous, and rock from Speedweed and the Birthday Suits. 6 p.m. to midnight. Free. 505 N. Third St., Minneapolis; 612-454-0258. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

THEATER

RULE OF THUMB

PARK SQUARE THEATRE

In her masterfully crafted murder mysteries, Agatha Christie often layers narratives with disreputable figures, ambiguous motives, red herrings, and escalating tension. Christie's more streamlined short stories, however, tend to deliver suspense as a precipitous jolt instead of a slow burn. Showcasing the thrills to be had from this concise style, Park Square Theatre is presenting *Rule of Thumb*, a stage anthology of three one-act whodunits: "The Wasp's Nest," "The Rats," and "The Patient." With its focus on an adulterous couple locked in a room and framed for murder, "The Rats" offers a morbidly suitable match for armchair sleuths. "The Patient" recounts the ordeal of a woman who believes a near fatal fall from her balcony was not merely an accident. The third work is likely to be a highlight for Christie fans, as it features her master detective, Hercule Poirot, in an early adventure involving an ill-advised love triangle and a thwarted murder. The show is in previews through July 18. 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays, plus July 17; 2 p.m. Sundays. \$16-\$60. 20 W. Seventh Place, St. Paul; 651-291-7005.

Through August 25 —BRAD RICHASON

FRIDAY

FESTIVAL

HIGHLAND FEST 2019

HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

With no theme outside of "enjoy the neighborhood," Highland Fest is one of those summer-time street parties that offers a little bit of everything. For those who imbibe, there's a beer tent where you can enjoy a drink with a neighbor. Or go all out at the wine and beer tasting Friday



COURTESY OF EVENT ORGANIZERS

night hosted by Thomas Liquors (\$20 scores you 30 samples). Friday night also offers a free screening of the kid-friendly classic *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*. Saturday's highlights include an adorable weiner dog race, and the All-Ford Car and Truck Show on Sunday should attract autophiles. Other fun to be had? Find local bands on multiple stages, carnival-style eats, a juried art show, inflatables, and morning runs. The Highland Tower will be also be open to the public on Saturday and Sunday for those who would like to take in a bird's-eye view of the celebration. Find more info at www.highlandfest.com. 5 to 11:30 p.m. Friday; 9 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Saturday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Free. Ford Parkway, from Finn Avenue to Howell Street, St. Paul.

Through Sunday —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

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JUNGLE THEATER

SATURDAY 7.20

ART/FESTIVAL

MINNEHAHA FALLS ART FAIR

MINNEHAHA FALLS

As far as locations go, you really can't ask for a better spot for a festival. Not only does this art fair offer a variety of vendors to explore, but it also has the falls as its incredible backdrop. During the day you'll find over 100 local makers sharing their wares, including plants and planters, paintings, foodstuffs, tarot tools, beauty products, and more. Check out the striking (and practical) pottery of A Mano, the gorgeous stone jewelry of Larissa Loden, and the cool sculptures of PD Stonecarver. Kid-friendly fun includes face painting, hands-on projects, and demonstrations. This is a dog-approved event, with unique pet services, homemade treats, and paw-print art sessions available. The falls' regular amenities will also be available, so take in the views, hike along the trails, grab a beer and some fried fish at Sea Salt, and make new friends at the dog park. Find more details at www.minnehahafallsartfair.com. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free. 4801 Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

THEATER

STINKERS

JUNGLE THEATER

Apologies to parents who rely upon a night at the theater as a fleeting evasion from the rigors of childrearing, but no refuge will be found at the Jungle Theater's latest production, *Stinkers*. Rife with a relatable array of parental frustrations, playwright Josh Tobiesen's new comedy seeks hilarity in an affectionately familiar source. Tobiesen reteams with the Jungle's artistic director (not to mention his own wife), Sarah Rasmussen, following the

success of their previous collaboration, 2015's critically acclaimed *Lone Star Spirits*. In *Stinkers*, stay-at-home dad Brad attempts to cope with two rambunctious toddlers during his wife's business trip. As if Brad's own insecurities weren't proving enough of a struggle, he finds himself besieged by parenting tips from three highly questionable sources: an inquisitive neighbor, his own ex-con mother (just released from prison), and his mother's friend, also a convicted felon. The cast is rounded out by the remarkably skilled ensemble of John Catron, Michael Curran-Dorsano, George Keller, and Sally Wingert (returning to the Jungle stage after a 15-year absence). As for the children, the production finds a novel means of depicting their irrepressible natures through the cleverly designed puppets of Chelsea M. Warren, operated by Megan Burns and Reed Sigmund. 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays; 2 p.m. Sundays. \$40-\$50. 2951 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-822-7063.

Through August 18 —BRAD RICHASON

SUNDAY 7.21

VARIETY

DO RE #METOO

THE CEDAR

There have been A LOT of problematic "classic" songs throughout history. Whether it's Neil Diamond's ode to underage girls ("Girl, You'll Be a Woman Soon"), the Four Tops gently harmonizing about why women need to be obedient ("Ain't No Woman Like the One I've Got"), or that messed-up blowjob song by Nickelback ("Figured You Out"), sexism and misogyny have dominated the airwaves for generations. This week, a group of hilarious and talented women, led by Twin Cities

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 ►



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SUNDAY, JULY 28



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FRIDAY, AUGUST 2

GAELIC STORM
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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7

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The Ordway heads down 42nd Street.

BRETT BEINER

CONTINUED FROM SUNDAY ►

comedy pioneer Lizz Winstead, are taking these songs back. Winstead's Abortion AF Tour is rolling through town, featuring performances and commentary on these classic hits without the swoony filters. Each show on the tour is dedicated to informing audience members about what's at stake for abortion rights locally, and how they can fight back against anti-choice laws. Some of the performers on the Minneapolis stop include Tina Schlieske from Tina and the B Sides, Jill Sobule (who everyone knows thanks to the song "Supermodel" from the cinematic classic *Clueless*), Lori Barbero of Babes in Toyland, Annie Mack, and other insanely talented female and non-binary musicians. It's comedy, music, education, advocacy, and burning down the patriarchy, all in one place. All ages. 7 p.m. \$25. 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674. —PATRICK STRAIT

BEACHES

MINNEAPOLIS BEACH PARTIES

BDE MAKKA SKA, LAKE NOKOMIS

Are you in the Twin Cities? Do you want to spend Sunday at a beach party? Well, you're in luck, as there are two happening today. Twin Cities Beach Blast, which will be at Thomas Beach on Bde Maka Ska (3700 Thomas Ave. S.), will have milk carton boat races, featuring homemade contraptions made by folks of all ages. Or watch in awe as creatives build sandcastles in hope of taking home a grand prize. Food and beverages will round out the free event, which runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Meanwhile, the Mondo Queer Beach Party at Lake Nokomis' east side beach (5003 E. Lake Nokomis Pkwy.) will offer inclusive fun for all ages. This chill party will have sand toys for kids, swimming with friends, music, and food on the grill. The event runs from noon to 5 p.m., and is free, though

donations are accepted. All funds raised go to Tigerrr: Trans Intersex Gender-Expansive Revolutionary Resources & Services. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

TUESDAY 7.23

THEATER

42ND STREET

ORDWAY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

The celebrated musical *42nd Street*, which premiered in 1980, was designed as a nostalgic throwback to the halcyon heyday of 1930s Broadway. Centering on the cast and crew of an upcoming production (focusing upon aspiring young ingénue Peggy Sawyer, tempestuous director Julian Marsh, and faded starlet Dorothy Brock), the razzle-dazzle spectacle explored the mythicized aura of musical theater wherein the glamour of the spotlight obscured the sacrifices exacted behind the curtain. While this new adaptation seeks to liberate the enduring tale from its period trappings, the enchanting spell of the stage has lost none of its potency. The vaunted standards of Al Dubin, Johnny Mercer, and Harry Warren (including "We're in the Money" and "Lullaby of Broadway") have been enlivened with funk-jazz arrangements by Everett Bradley that lend an exhilarating new scope to better serve the thrilling choreography of Jared Grimes. With a cast consisting of Tony Award winners Tamara Tunie (as Dorothy Brock) and Jarrod Emick (as Julian Marsh), emerging talents like Kimberly Immanuel (as Peggy Sawyer), and a kinetically charged ensemble, this Michael Heitzman-directed work will appeal to contemporary sensibilities, even while professing the everlasting attraction of Broadway dreams. 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays; 2 p.m. Sundays. \$34-\$111. 345 Washington St., St. Paul; 651-224-4222. **Through August 11** —BRAD RICHASON

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SOME TREPIDATIONS

The Lion King remake isn't all Hakuna Matata



DISNEY

BY BRYAN MILLER

Stockholm Syndrome has given way to mandatory software updates in the Disney marketing department.

Moviegoers old enough to have seen the original *Lion King* in theaters will remember Disney's strategy for squeezing a few extra dollars from their existing IP: They'd take the VHS tapes of their classic animated films off shelves for years at a time, then rerelease them as a special "limited edition."

Essentially, every few years Disney would send ransom notes to its fans. "Pony up now if you ever want to see the Little Mermaid and Dumbo again." The semi-Orwellian term for this double-plus devious marketing concept was "The Disney Vault," and the artificial scarcity helped inflate the value of shit they'd had lying around the Magic Kingdom for years.

That won't fly in the era of streaming and illegal downloading, when soon the new Disney+ service will render the entire library instantly accessible for a monthly fee. Now the Mouse House is taking a page from the Apple playbook: keep retrofitting the same tech so the last incarnation looks obsolete. Starting with 2016's *The Jungle Book*, Disney began updating (or "updating") classics with some combination of state-of-the-art digital animation and live-action. *Beauty and the Beast* returned in 2017, next year will bring *Mulan*, and this summer alone has featured two 2.0s—last month's Will Smith-fronted *Aladdin* and now *The Lion King*.

Director Jon Favreau applies his *Jungle Book* technique to one of Disney's all-time great original works. He hews closely to the familiar story of Simba, the cocky lion cub who loses his princeling status when nefarious uncle Scar collaborates with some hyenas to kill Simba's father.

With the help of new friends, a long journey, and a few peppy Elton John numbers, Simba learns to understand the responsibility bestowed upon him by his father and reclaim his rightful reign of the pride.

Moments in the movie feel fresh. A plot about an egomaniacal leader who colludes with a hostile foreign power to seize control, decimating the environment and projecting all his sins on his political opponents is... let's call it evergreen. And the voice casting is sensational, smartly bringing back James Earl Jones for his iconic performance as Mufasa alongside Chiwetel Ejiofor, Alfre Woodard, Donald Glover, and Keegan-Michael Key. It's a big step up from the days when the African savannah was colonized by the likes of Matthew Broderick and Jonathan Taylor Thomas. Strangely, bereft of her powerful physical presence, Beyoncé manages to fade into the background in the role

THE LION KING

directed by Jon Favreau
area theaters, now showing

of lioness Nala—even with a brand-new tune. Still, an overall improvement.

And the animation is gorgeous, an incredible technical feat. But is the problem with the original that it doesn't look realistic? The art of cartooning is not a steady progression toward photorealism. Why not also update Van Gogh's *Starry Night* with a shot taken by the Hubble telescope? The computer effects here perfectly capture beads of rainwater glistening in Simba's mane, but that realism fails to capture the emotional expressiveness of the hand-drawn original and becomes discordant when he later breaks into song.

The only real value added here is to Disney's bottom line. Not even John Dillinger could so thoroughly ransack a vault. **C+**

MAGIC AND A/C

Walking Shadow's puzzle/play is pretty cool



DAN NORMAN

BY JAY GABLER

Blame the Adepts of the Peacock. Something has gone terribly wrong in the magical world of Walking Shadow Theatre Company's *Cabal*. It's a little unclear exactly what, but it seems that the members of a certain sect have dabbled with powers they should have left alone, and now it's your problem.

Yes, yours. *Cabal* comes billed as "a play with puzzles," now open for an indefinite run in a custom-designed space at the northeast Minneapolis arts complex that's been home to the Haunted Basement for the past two years. (This year, the Haunted Basement is heading to Rosedale.) You stay above ground for *Cabal*, but that doesn't mean you won't do any digging in the dirt.

Walking Shadow, known for its strong productions of conventional plays at venues across the Twin Cities, has previously crafted two of these interactive entertainments, starting with a popular show at the 2006 Fringe Festival. As a press release proudly notes, that long preceded the current puzzle-room boom, so project

lead David Pisa can justifiably consider himself an old hand at this.

As outdoor thermometers topped 90 degrees on Sunday afternoon, the prospect of retreating into an ostensibly fire-lit (but actually air-conditioned) study seemed incredibly appealing, whatever dark secrets might lurk therein. Ten initiates gladly grasped a staff and swore allegiance to the Order of the White Stag, not to be confused with the imbibers of the White Claw so often active on Lake Minnetonka.

Cabal is not just a puzzle room but a series of puzzle rooms, and successes unlock gateways to previously unseen environments. Each striking space was created by Pisa with dozens of collaborators, including a lighting designer (Megan Reilly), a sound designer (Isabel Patt), and specialists like Sam Boswell ("white stag skull artisan") and Whittney Streeter ("gramophone modification").

Playwright John Heimbuch wrote the script, based on a story conceived with Pisa, and directed the two characters who initiates meet along their journey. On

CABAL

2010 E. Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
walkingshadowcompany.org

Sunday, actors Tara Borman and Jamie Case brought complete commitment to their roles as White Stag believers who guide initiates (that would be you) on a quest to learn the secrets of their cabal.

From a dramatic standpoint, the challenge with a project like this is to keep an audience invested in a story when concrete tasks keep, as it were, breaking the spell. While you're watching a bunch of latter-day Minnesotans in sport shorts run around a room sorting runes, it's easy to forget about the missing mage, and it can even be hard to keep a straight face when the ultra-sincere actors treat the whole situation as a matter of life or death.

Still, Walking Shadow brings Renaissance Fair flair to the 90-minute show, transporting you through a series of surprises and even tossing a little other-dimensional therapy into the mix as well. *Cabal* is a cool experience, and not just literally. **CF**



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SUNDAY JULY 21

HITCHVILLE

3pm - 7pm

THURSDAY JULY 25

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE

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SATURDAY JULY 27

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THURSDAY JULY 18 (SHOW STARTS AT 9 PM)

Extraterrestrials, Tokiyo (Japan)
Beautiness, River Sinclair

FRIDAY JULY 19

Lungs, Exits, The Central, Serac

SATURDAY JULY 20

Aseethe, Druids, Snow Burial, Trita

TUESDAY JULY 23

Pealds (StL), Other Sun (StL)
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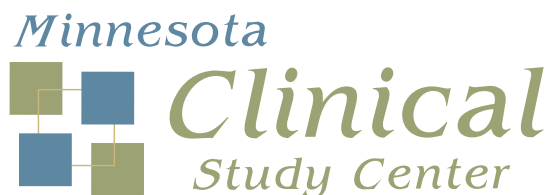
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BY NATHAN ROBERTS

Brett Tyler spent his childhood listening to grunge and ska in suburban Minnesota, but he'd often visit his rural family deep in the north woods in Thief River Falls. Tyler recalls driving in his grandpa's truck as a little kid, bouncing down gravel roads listening to country music.

"Who is this singing?" Tyler asked one day, incredulous. Grandpa responded, "This is Alan Jackson, he's a country singer." The young Tyler crossed his arms. "Grandpa, I don't think I'll ever like Alan Jackson."

He was wrong.

Brett Tyler now spends his days in his small recording studio in Nashville writing songs with some of the biggest stars in country music: Maren Morris, Blake Shelton, Tim McGraw, Morgan Wallen, Dustin Lynch, Chris Young, Jimmie Allen. He just wrote the summer banger "Y'all Boys" for Florida Georgia Line. And Alan Jackson has become one of his favorite artists.

So how did a kid from Wayzata end up in the South writing about pickup trucks and cheap beer? As a teenager Tyler picked up the acoustic guitar, and after high school he moved to Brainerd, where he started playing small-town bars, churches, and summer camps. He spent his afternoons fishing on the lake and driving along gravel roads through the pines. These years helped him understand and finally fall in love with country music.

"There's just something that feels like home to me that I can't explain," Tyler says. "Country music brought me back to the feeling of spending time up north with my family, and showed me the beauty of simple things and a simple life."

Tyler spent most of his 20s in northeast Minneapolis playing heartfelt alt-country songs in the style of his heroes the Jayhawks and the Wallflowers. He became a fixture at the 331 Club and took jobs as back-up guitarist and DJ.

"I loved playing shows in Minneapolis, but I felt like there was always gonna be a better singer, a better performer, and I really enjoyed the process of writing and creating the music away from the spotlight," Tyler says. At 26, he was still working at Starbucks to pay his health insurance and rent.

Then he met a few musicians returning from a songwriting trip to pitch pop-country songs to big record labels in Nashville. It was a revelation. "I knew there were people who had jobs being songwriters, but I didn't know it was something a kid

CAN'T SAY HE AIN'T COUNTRY

Eight years ago, Brett Tyler left Minnesota for Nashville. Now he writes hits for country music's biggest stars.



BRETT TYLER

from Minnesota could do as a potential profession," Tyler says.

He decided to try his luck and joined his friends on their next road trip. After one week he was convinced Nashville was where he needed to be. In September 2011, he packed his rusted-out Chevy Blazer and secured a job at a Nashville Starbucks.

"The first summer I was down there I was more broke than I have ever been. I was writing songs every day of the week and working 30 to 40 hours every weekend at Starbucks," he says. "Nashville folks have a similar Minnesota Nice way of greeting people, where you never really know if they

mean it or not. There is a joke in Nashville among songwriters: They say, 'We should write.' Because it's what people say when you are too green to realize it's frowned upon to walk up to a total stranger and ask to write music with them."

Tyler spent months trying to make connections, and he played "writers rounds," intimate showcases where songwriters perform original songs. "In Nashville, there's always a chance that publishers and major record label executives will show up and hear something they liked. Nashville has a very network-heavy culture, so it's important to go places, and be seen."

Tyler frequented one small bar because its menu offered a Minnesota-style Juicy Lucy, and that's where his big break came. "I was singing a bunch of songs I had written and a music publisher from a reputable company called Combustion Music, a partner of Warner Chappell Music, said he liked my songs and wanted to talk about being one of their next writers." In May 2013, two years after he moved to Nashville, Tyler signed to his first publishing deal.

There was a steep learning curve after he got signed. "When I was writing alt-country Americana, I was more focused on the feel of the music and not paying as much attention to the lyrical side of things," Tyler says. "Going into pop-country I realized abstract lyrics don't fly. I still love writing songs that are personal and musically fulfilling, but there is something challenging and fun about writing songs for the country music listener. When I started writing those songs, I'd focus on the guy or girl who's in the front row at the concert. The one who wants to forget about the long work week they had, drink a beer, and sing along with something easy and fun. It's harder to do than you'd expect."

Tyler spent long days in the studio working with well-established songwriters, and occasionally had the chance to write with some of the non-country artists he'd grown up listening to. "I had one write with the band Lit and I got an afternoon with Zac Hanson from the Hanson brothers," he says. He also wrote with Gavin DeGraw, Nelly Furtado, and A.J. McLean of the Backstreet Boys. "Nashville is a fun town because you honestly never know who you might end up meeting or writing with."

But Tyler's career really took off when he met a young songwriter named Maren Morris. "Maren came to town to be a songwriter, not an artist," he says. "We started writing a lot of songs together and there was something magical about the dynamic we had. She was never afraid to chase my crazy ideas, and we loved a lot of the same music. I knew she was really good. I didn't know she would blow up and win a Grammy."

In 2015, the co-written songs they'd uploaded to Soundcloud helped land Morris a record deal. "The two songs I have on her first record, *Hero*—'Sugar' and 'Space'—are the last two songs we had written together. I learned from Maren to show up to every write that's on my calendar. You never know what's gonna happen."

Tyler stresses to aspiring songwriters that it's hard to break into the business

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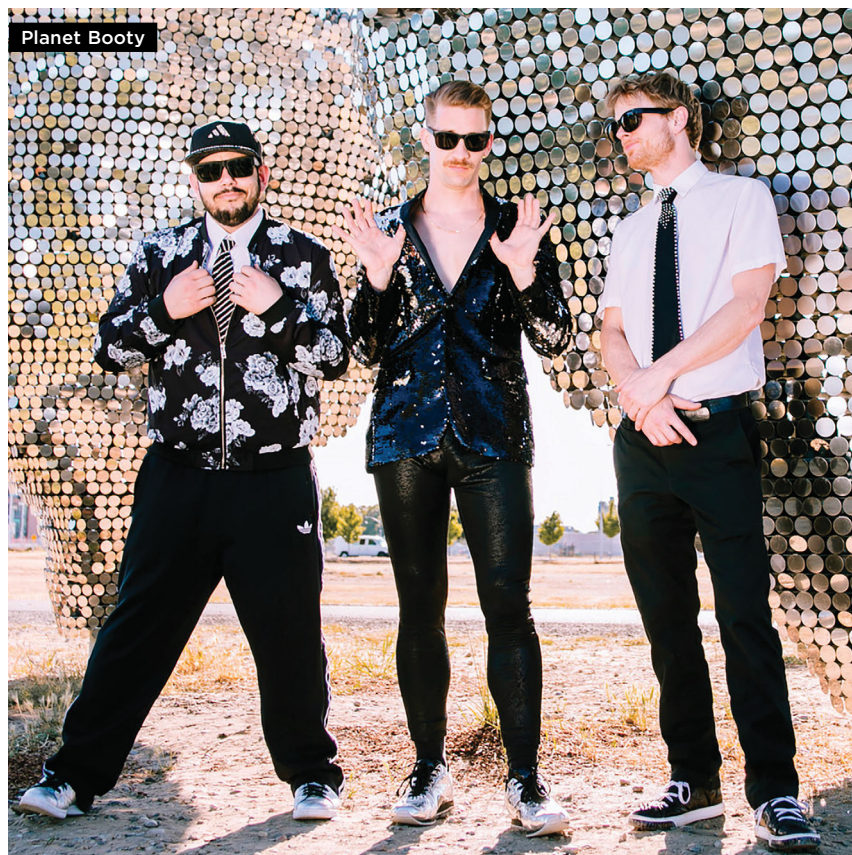
MUSIC

without relocating to a city like New York, L.A., or Nashville. “There are plenty of great writers who live in Minnesota and take trips to Nashville, like Dan Wilson, writing for Dixie Chicks and pop artists. But if you’re new and nobody knows your name, you need to come join the music community. Go out for drinks and you meet somebody who knows somebody.”

Still, Tyler misses the Minnesota music scene.

“The artists there are so passionate, and the fans are equally as passionate. I wish more of the world could hear what’s happening in the great white north. There’s not always dollar signs behind it, but if you can do music in Minnesota full-time, that is the dream.” **GF**

CRITICS’ PICKS



RACHEL RADCLIFFE PHOTOGRAPHY

KYLE CRAFT & SHOWBOAT HONEY

TURF CLUB, WEDNESDAY 7.17

An inevitable development in the history of combinatorial novelty, Kyle Craft’s honky-tonk glam-rock hybrid blares as the dusty guitars strum and plinky pianos pound with a vehemence unbecoming of mere period pieces. His devilish singing is the final touch on a rather elaborate cartoon. His new *Showboat Honey*, named for his backing band, comes out July 12. With Warren Thomas Fenzi. 7:30 p.m. \$12/\$14. 1601 University Ave., St. Paul; 651-647-0486. —LUCAS FAGEN

PLANET BOOTY

TURF CLUB, SATURDAY 7.20

A sunny pop-funk outfit with a fondness for erotic theatrics and self-acceptance anthems, Planet Booty combine warm electronic fizz with the insouciance of the bitch track. Their new EP, *GUILTY PLEASURE*,

is sweetly melodic, layering on the horns (“Authenticity”), the squelchy vocoder (“I Can’t Make My Mind Up”), and the sleazy monologues (“Taco Tuesday”). With Karate Chop, Silence, and BadNraD. 21+. 8 p.m. \$10/\$12. 1601 University Ave., St. Paul; 651-647-0486. —LUCAS FAGEN

THE POSIES

TURF CLUB, SUNDAY 7.21

At the height of the grunge ’90s, the Posies unfashionably mastered power-pop’s streamlining of rock. Jon Auer and Ken Stringfellow’s light guitar fuzz and layered sighing harmonies are maximized for efficient uplift, speeding by in an abstract blur. They’re using their current tour to develop new material that might make it onto a new album. With the Shackletons, Ryan and Pony, and DJ Jake Rudh. 7 p.m. \$22/\$25. 1601 University Ave., St. Paul; 651-647-0486. —LUCAS FAGEN



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Thursday, July 18
The Cedar Presents
THE LOWEST PAIR
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Doors 7pm • Show 7:30pm • All Ages • \$15 GA

Friday, July 19
The Cedar and KFAI Present
LA MISA NEGRA AND DOS SANTOS
with Special Guest
Doors 7pm • Show 8pm • All Ages • \$18 Advanced / \$20 Day Of Show

Saturday, July 20
The Cedar Presents
FREAQUE
with Lena Elizabeth, Charles Roderick, and Danny Akah
Doors 7pm • Show 8pm • All Ages • \$12 Advanced / \$15 Day of Show

Sunday, July 21
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Doors 7pm • Show 7:30pm • All Ages • \$35 GA / \$45 Center Section

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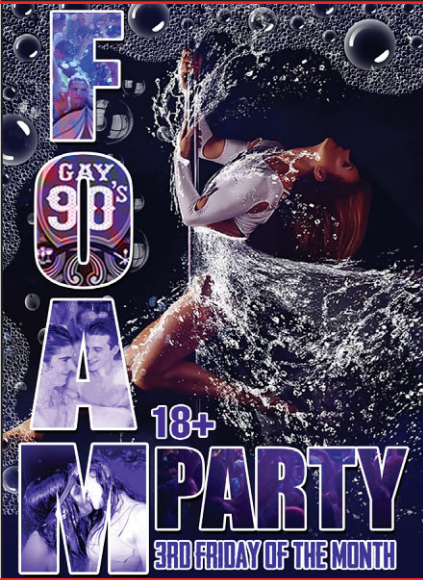
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Thursday, July 18 7:30 pm REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE (1956) 35MM <i>PRE-SCREENING MUSIC BY KINDA FONDA WANDA</i>	Thursday, July 25 7:30 pm REPO MAN (1984) <i>35MM PRESENTATION</i>
Friday, July 19 8:00 pm JOHNNY PEMBERTON // LIVE COMEDY <i>WITH ELLIE HINO & ZACH COLTER</i>	Friday, July 26 8:00 pm THE GATED COMMUNITY <i>Parkway Pickoff Finalists!</i>
Saturday Matinee, July 20 1:00 pm TRANSFORMERS: THE MOVIE (1986) <i>35MM PRESENTATION</i>	Saturday Matinee, July 27 1:00 pm BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE (1989)
Saturday, July 20 8:00 pm STAR WARS: EPISODE IV A NEW HOPE <i>ENCORE SCREENING!</i>	Saturday, July 27 7:30 pm HEATBOX PRESENTS: SOUL-PLAYERS SEASON 2 FINALE
Sunday, July 21 12pm, 3pm, 6pm, & 9pm STAR WARS: EPISODE V THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK	Sunday, July 28 12pm, 3pm, 6pm, & 9pm STAR WARS: EPISODE VI RETURN OF THE JEDI

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MUSIC LISTINGS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17

BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME
15+. 6 p.m. July 17; \$40-\$71. Varsity Theater, 1308 4th St. SE, Minneapolis; 844-678-5483.

BLACK PUMAS
With Los Coast. 7 p.m. July 17; \$15-\$17. 7th St. Entry, 701 1st Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388.

JUNIOR BROWN
With Bernie King & the Guilty Pleasures. 7 p.m. July 17; \$20-\$40. Fine Line Music Cafe, 318 1st Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8100.

ROBERT EARL KEEN AND THE LONE BELLOW
7:30 p.m. July 17; \$50-\$62.50. Minnesota Zoo Weesner Amphitheater, 13000 Zoo Blvd., Apple Valley; 952-431-9200.

THURSDAY, JULY 18

ARISTOCRATS
With Travis Larson Band. 7 p.m. July 18; \$25-\$30. Amsterdam Bar and Hall, 6 W. 6th St., St. Paul; 612-285-3112.

JOE CAREY (ALBUM RELEASE SHOW)
With Martin Devaney, Jessica Carey, and Scottie Devlin. 7 p.m. July 18; \$10-\$15. The Hook and Ladder Theater & Lounge, 3010 Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis; 612-345-7166.

PARQUET COURTS
With Cate Le Bon. 7 p.m. July 18; \$25-\$28. First Avenue, 701 1st Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388.

THE JAUNTEE
With Circle of Heat. 7:30 p.m. July 18; \$10-\$12. 7th St. Entry, 701 1st Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388.

THE LOWEST PAIR
With Sam Rae. 7:30 p.m. July 18; \$15. The Cedar, 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674.

FRIDAY, JULY 19

BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY
With Red Poets Society. 5:30 p.m. July 19; \$30-\$35. Cabooze Outdoor Plaza, 917 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-6425.

FLETCHER MAGELLAN (EP RELEASE SHOW)
With Slim Stone, Ang & the Ranch Hands, and DJ Truckstache. 8 p.m. July 19; \$9-\$12. The Hook and Ladder Theater & Lounge, 3010 Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis; 612-345-7166.

J. PLAZA (RECORD RELEASE SHOW)
With the MN Connection, Daddy Dinero, Baby Shel, Will Robinson, Toxsick, and Andrew Thomas. 8:30 p.m. July 19; \$10. 7th St. Entry, 701 1st Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388.

LA MISA NEGRA AND DOS SANTOS
8 p.m. July 19; \$18-\$20. The Cedar, 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674.

LOWERTOWN BLUES AND FUNK FESTIVAL 2019
Featuring Thomas McCary's Commodores Experience, Jon Cleary, Boogie Wonderland, Popa Chubby, Carolyn Wonderland, Joyann Parker, Sumo Seven, Bridget Kelly Band, Craig Clark Band, and a youth performance stage. 4:30-10 p.m. July 19; 12-10 p.m. July

20. Free. Mears Park, 221 E. 5th St., St. Paul; 651-632-5111.

ROSANNE CASH
7:30 p.m. July 19; \$46-\$58.50. Minnesota Zoo Weesner Amphitheater, 13000 Zoo Blvd., Apple Valley; 952-431-9200.

SATURDAY, JULY 20

BACKSTREET BOYS
8 p.m. July 20; Xcel Energy Center, 199 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul; 651-726-8240.

FREAQUE (RECORD RELEASE SHOW)
With Lena Elizabeth, Charles Rodreick, and Danny Akah. 8 p.m. July 20; \$12-\$15. The Cedar, 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674.

JACKIE VENSON
With Mina Moore. 7:30 p.m. July 20; \$16-\$18. 7th St. Entry, 701 1st Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388.

KIZZ DANIEL
9 p.m. July 20; \$40. Skyway Theatre, 711 Hennepin Ave., 2nd floor, Minneapolis; 612-333-6100.

NIGHT MOVES
With Lady Lark and Sam Cassidy. 8 p.m. July 20; \$15. First Avenue, 701 1st Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388.

SAVAGE MOODS (ALBUM RELEASE SHOW)
With 26 Bats and Elle PF. 11 p.m. July 20; \$10-\$15. Icehouse, 2528 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis; 612-276-6523.

TOWER OF POWER
7:30 p.m. July 20; \$47.50-\$60. Minnesota Zoo Weesner Amphitheater, 13000 Zoo Blvd., Apple Valley; 952-431-9200

SUNDAY, JULY 21

LYLE LOVETT AND HIS LARGE BAND
7:30 p.m. July 21; \$56-\$89. Historic State Theatre, 805 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007.

MONDAY, JULY 22

BLACK MIDI
With Another Heaven. 8 p.m. July 22; \$13-\$15. 7th St. Entry, 701 1st Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388.

GUSTER
With Mikaela Davis. 7:30 p.m. July 22; \$40-\$52.50. Minnesota Zoo Weesner Amphitheater, 13000 Zoo Blvd., Apple Valley; 952-431-9200.

TUESDAY, JULY 23

BELLE AND SEBASTIAN
With Men I Trust. 7:30 p.m. July 23; \$56-\$68.50. Minnesota Zoo Weesner Amphitheater, 13000 Zoo Blvd., Apple Valley; 952-431-9200.

JAKE SHIMABUKURO
7:30 p.m. July 23; \$35-\$45. The Cedar, 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674.

KHALID
7:30 p.m. July 23; \$26-\$77. Xcel Energy Center, 199 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul; 651-726-8240.

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Brezsny

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): An Aries reader sent me a boisterous email, "I was afraid I was getting too bogged down by my duties," he said, "too hypnotized by routine, too serious about my problems. So I took drastic action." He then described the ways he broke out of his slump. Here's an excerpt: "I gave laughing lessons to a cat. I ate a spider. I conducted a sneezing contest. I smashed an alarm clock with a hammer. Whenever an elderly woman walked by, I called out 'Hail to the Queen' and did a backflip. I gave names to my spoon (Hortense), the table (Beatrice), a fly that was buzzing around (Fallon), and a toothpick (Arturo)." According to my analysis of the astrological omens, Aries, you'd be wise to stage a comparable uprising.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Welcome home, homegirls and homeboys. After observing all your homesteading in homes away from home, I'm pleased to see you getting curious about the real home brew again. I wonder how many times I'll say the word "home" before you register the message that it's high time for you to home in on some homemade, homegrown homework? Now here's a special note to any of you who may be feeling psychologically homeless or exiled from your spiritual home: the coming weeks will be a favorable time to address that ache and remedy that problem.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): The world is full of eternally restless people who seethe with confused desires they don't understand. Fueled by such unfathomable urges, they are driven in unknown directions to accomplish fuzzy goals. They may be obsessed in ways that make them appear to be highly focused, but the objects of their obsession are impossible to attain or unite with. Those objects don't truly exist! I have described this phenomenon in detail, Gemini, because the coming months will offer you all the help and support you could ever need to make sure you're forever free of any inclination to be like that.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): What would you say if I asked you to tell me who you truly are? I wouldn't want to hear so much about your titles and awards. I'd be curious about your sacred mysteries, not your literal history. I'd want to know the treasured secrets you talk about with yourself before you fall asleep. I'd ask you to sing the songs you love and describe the allies who make you feel real. I'd urge you to riff on the future possibilities that both scare you and thrill you. What else? What are some other ways you might show me core truths about your irrepressible soul? Now is a good time to meditate on these riddles.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Isaac Asimov wrote a science-fiction story about a physicist who masters time travel and summons William Shakespeare into the present time. The Bard enrolls in a night school class about his own plays—and proceeds to flunk the course. Modern ideas and modes of discourse are simply too disorienting to him. He is unable to grasp the theories that centuries' worth of critics have developed about his work. With this as a cautionary tale, I invite you to time-travel not four centuries into the future, but just 10 years. From that vantage point, look back at the life you're living now. How would you evaluate and understand it? Do you have any constructive criticism to offer? Any insights that could help you plan better for your long-term future?

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): The coming weeks will be a favorable time for you to buy yourself toys, change your image for no rational reason, and indulge in an interesting pleasure that you have been denying yourself for no good reason. In addition, I hope you will engage in at least two heart-to-heart talks with yourself, preferably using funny voices and comical body language. You could also align yourself gracefully with cosmic rhythms by dancing more than usual, and by goofing off more than usual, and by wandering in the wilderness and seeking to recapture your lost innocence more than usual.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Although you'll never find an advertisement for Toyota or Coca Cola or Apple within my horoscope column, you will find hype for spiritual commodities like creativity, love, and freedom. Like everyone else, I'm a huckster. My flackery may be more ethical and uplifting than others', but the fact is that I still try to persuade you to "buy" my ideas. The moral of the story: Everyone, even the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu, is selling something. I hope that what I'm saying here purges any reluctance you might have about presenting yourself and your ideas in the most favorable light. It's high time for you to hone your sales pitch, to explain why your approach to life is so wise, to be a forceful spokesperson and role model for the values you hold dear.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You are growing almost too fast, but that won't necessarily be a problem—as long as you don't expect everyone around you to grow as fast as you. I suspect that you also know almost too much—but I don't anticipate that will spawn envy and resistance as long as you cultivate a bit of humility. I have an additional duty to report that you're on the verge of being too attractive for your own good—although you have not yet actually reached the tipping point, so maybe your hyper-attractiveness will serve you rather than undermine you. In conclusion, Scorpio, I invite you to celebrate your abundance, but don't flaunt it.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): The snow leopards of Central Asia crave a lot of room to wander. Zoologists say that each male prefers its territory to be about 84 square miles, and each female likes to have 44 square miles. I don't think you'll require quite that vast a turf in the coming weeks, Sagittarius. But on the other hand, it will be important not to underestimate the spaciousness you'll need in order to thrive. Give yourself permission to be expansive.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): "I want to do things so wild with you that I don't know how to say them," Author Anais Nin wrote that in a letter to her Capricorn lover Henry Miller. Is there anyone you could or should or want to say something like that? If your answer is yes, now is a good time to be so candid and bold. If the answer is no, now would be a good time to scout around for a person to whom you could or should or want to say such a thing. And if you'd like to throw in a bit more enticement, here's another seductive lyric from Anais: "Only the united beat of sex and heart together can create ecstasy."

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Did you hear the story about the California mom who started a series of forest fires so as to boost her son's career as a firefighter? She is an apt role model for behavior you should diligently avoid in the coming weeks. It's unwise and unprofitable for you and yours to str up a certain kind of trouble simply because it's trouble that you and yours have become skilled at solving. So how should you use your problem-solving energy, which I suspect will be at a peak? I suggest you go hunting for some very interesting and potentially productive trouble that you haven't wrangled with before—some rousing challenge that will make you even smarter than you already are.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): The heroine of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* is curious, adventurous, and brave. First she follows a well-dressed rabbit down a rabbit hole into an alternate universe. Later she slips through a mirror into yet another parallel reality. Both times, with great composure, she navigates her way through many odd, paranormal, and unpredictable events. She enjoys herself immensely as she deals with a series of unusual characters and unfamiliar situations. I'm going to speculate that Alice is a Pisces. Are you ready for your very own Alice-in-Wonderland phase? Here it comes!

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12
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THE INVISIBLE MAN
BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- 1 Japanese WWII general
5 Magical charms
10 Go wrong
13 Oryx cousin
14 Samurai's sword
15 "That is so-o-o-o uninteresting"

Down

- 16 ___ Knight
19 Comprehend
20 Ivory, Coast, et al.
21 Ticker valve
22 Missal's spot
23 Collage class
24 ___ lies
33 Sickly white
34 Grand Prix racing star Hamilton
35 Do some lawn work
36 Freezes (over)
37 Fit to be tied
38 Shoe polish brand with a bird on its tin
39 Auction spot
40 On the fringes
41 Nightmares
42 ___ ate lists
45 Cartoonish cry upon seeing some vermin
46 Cryptogram's source
47 Parasailer's spot
50 Soviet spy Rosenberg
53 Ex-British US ambassador Darroch
56 Theme of this puzzle (some respacing required)

- 59 Stud holder
60 Give, as a heads up
61 Stare in a way
62 Meet one's maker
63 Scientist's backing, maybe
64 Logician's mistake
28 Video game board
29 Soft serve ice cream selection
30 Kind of acid
31 Direction to a masseuse
32 Deli cheese
37 Horseshoe's symbol
38 She had a beef with Taylor
40 Chess student's lesson
41 Type of battery
43 Dietitian's selection
44 Barely squeeze through
47 Guest piece for the paper
48 Spiced cuppa
49 Word on some Euro coins
50 Vocalist James
51 Slight in build
52 Great bulk
53 Femur connector
54 Company that sells the HEMNES furniture line
55 Car sticker letters
57 Boolean logic word
58 100%, if not 110%

Last Week's Answer

S	P	L	A	T	B	B	Q	B	E	A	R	S
A	R	E	N	A	O	S	U	A	N	N	U	L
Y	O	G	A	P	O	S	S	E	T	R	I	B
I	P	O	E	N	C	H	O	M	I	E		
T	C	B	Y	C	H	A	S	S	E	B	A	N
O	R	A	T	E	W	H	O	S	E			
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P	O	E	S	Y			W	A	Y	F	I	R

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Deep Cucks

I'm a nice Midwestern guy—why am I so turned on by cuckolding fantasies?

I am a bi, white, married man—35 years old and living in a big Midwestern city. I'd like to know what's going on in my psyche—from a sex-research perspective. I've been hung up on cuckold fantasies with my female partner for years now. I'm a creative person and I'm especially fond of creative fantasizing in bed, and my partner enjoys this as well. But 9 times out of 10, I'm spinning a yarn about her fucking other men, whether it's a threesome, cuckolding with me watching, or her going out on dates and coming home a delicious mess. These fantasies took an unexpected turn when I asked her to share stories about people she fucked in the past. She obliged—and holy shit, was I turned on. The only unfortunate thing is that she did not have many great sexual experiences in the past, so she feels like there is not a lot to share. Anyway, we have an amazing sex life, obviously, and I feel no shame whatsoever about these fantasies or how turned on her memories make us. I'm just curious as to why it turns me on so much. I know others have similar kinks, but it seems so antithetical to the heteronormative expectations of what I should be turned on by. Any ideas?

FANTASIES RELIABLY ENHANCE EVERY DALLIANCE

"Why am I like this?" questions are always rabbit holes," said Dr. David Ley, a clinical psychologist, author, and sex researcher. "We create rich, satisfying stories that are really just a form of mental masturbation—no bust on masturbation—when the truth is, at least at this point, we really have no clear idea why people have any of the unique sexual fantasies they do." (Dr. Ley literally wrote the book on cuckolding: *Insatiable Wives: Women Who Stray and the Men Who Love Them*.)

One popular explanation for why being cuckolded might turn a man on—why knowing his wife or girlfriend had fucked someone else (or was fucking someone else in front of him) might turn a guy on—was the "sperm competition" theory. To summarize: A man who suspects his female partner recently had sex with another male—and whose reptile brain believes the other man's semen might be "present" inside her—will have

a more powerful and voluminous orgasm when he next mates with his female partner in an effort to "flood out" his competitor's

semen. For a time, many sex researchers theorized that male swingers and cuckolds were subconsciously inducing "sperm competition" reactions—i.e., they were in it for the more powerful orgasms.

"Unfortunately, much of the research into sperm competition is now suspect, due to a failure to replicate many of these findings," said Dr. Ley. "So to a degree, we're now saying, 'You know,

it's complicated, everyone is different, and there are no simple answers.'"

And now that we've said that, FREED, Dr. Ley, who has worked with many cuckold couples, has noticed patterns, and he's willing to put out some theories of his own.

"Many cuckolds have a desire to engage bisexually with other men, using their wife's body as a sort of proxy," said Dr. Ley. "These fantasies might be a way for him to express his bisexuality while including his wife. Also, vicarious erotic fulfillment is often a central component in cuckold fantasies. This goes beyond simple voyeurism—and FREED's comment about his wife's regret at not having enough sexual experiences to share offers us a clue in this direction. Many cuckolds celebrate their partners being sexually unrestrained. FREED might just be turned on by the idea of his wife cutting loose and sharing that supercharged erotic energy with other partners."

Finally, FREED, I wanted to add a "ding, ding, ding" to something you mentioned at the end of your letter. The erotic power of doing something that seems antithetical to the expectations heaped on us by culture, religion, family, etc. should never be underestimated. While not everyone is turned on by the thought of transgressing against sexual or social norms, a significant percentage is. So long as our transgressive turn-ons can be realized with other consenting adults, we should worry less about the "why" and more about the "when," "where," and "how." (Now, in private, and safely!)

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